

On the Derivational History of Iranian **mairya* and **mariyaka*

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The present study aims at investigating the derivational history of old Iranian **mairya* and **mariyaka* in different Iranian languages through to Modern Persian as well as in Sanskrit. To fulfill the objectives, texts representative of the use of **mariyaka* from five Iranian languages have been extracted and analyzed.

1. Introduction and Background of the Study

The old Iranian words **mariyaka* have exercised over a century of study. The most relevant ones are summarized chronologically as follows:

- a. Bartholome (1904) explored and discussed the term **mariyaka* and its derivations.
- b. Herzfeld (1938) presented some points on the meaning of *marika* as it occurred in Old Persian.
- c. Wikander (1938) investigated the development and changes of meanings of the word **mariyaka* from Vedic to Avestan.
- d. Dumézil (1952) presented some theories on *márya* and its relation to the Indo-Iranian gods.
- e. Kent (1953) dealt with the meaning of the term *marika* in Old Persian.
- f. Mayrhofer (1963) analyzed the etymology of the term *ma'rya*- while Nyberg (1964) discussed the word in Middle Persian regarding its etymology and meaning.
- g. Widengren (1969) investigated the term *mīre/a*, and its relation with social institutions and organizations.
- h. Mackenzie (1971) investigated the term *mērag* in Middle Persian from a semantic point of view while Hinz (1972) discussed the term *marika*- in Old Persian.
- i. Mayrhofer (1986-2002) investigated the term *márya*- across the Indo-European languages.
- j. Schmitt (2000 & 2009) dealt with the term *marika*- in Old Persian.

1.1. The objectives of the Study

The present study aims at investigating the derivational history of Old Iranian **mairya* and **mariyaka* in different Iranian languages such as Avestan, Old, Middle and Early and New Modern Persian as well as in Vedic. **mariyaka* originally appeared in the form of *marian-ni*, an Indo-Aryan loanword describing warriors who served the king of Mitanni in Mesopotamia (Widengren 1969: 12). It also appeared in Akkadian as *maria-nnu* 'charioteer' and in Egyptian *mrin* 'a member of a group of young soldiers'.

For the present study, sample texts are presented from the five Indo-Iranian languages in the belief that they are representative of the use of the word **mariyaka* over its entire derivational history. In the same direction and for the ease of understanding on the part of the readers, their translations have been provided from traditional authoritative sources as indicated after each text.

2. Corpus: The uses of **mairya* and **mariyaka* in the Indo-Iranian languages

In the following sections, we present texts in which examples of the word **mariyaka* is presented.

2.1. Vedic

According to Mayrhofer (1963), the Vedic word *márya* is masculine and means 'young man, lover and free young man'. The Vedic *márya*- derives from Indo-Iranian **meryo*-. Examples of **márya*- in the meaning 'young man' in Vedic are shown in the following texts. .

Text 1: RV 1, 115.2 (Griffith 1896)

sūryo devīmuṣasaṃ rocamānāṃ mario na yoṣāmahyeti
paścāt |
yatrā naro devayanto yughāni vitanvate prati bhadrāya
bhadram ||

Like as a **young man** followeth a maiden, so doth the Sun
 the Dawn, refulgent Goddess:
 Where pious men extend their generations, before the
 Auspicious One for happy fortune.

Text 2: RV 3.33.10 (Griffith 1896)

ā te kāro śṛṇavāmā vacāṃsi yayātha dūrādanasā rathena |
*ni te naṃsai pīpyāneva yoṣā **maryāyeva** kanyā śaśvacai te ||*

Yea, we will listen to thy words, O singer. With wain and
 car from far away thou comest.
 Low, like a nursing mother, will I bend me, and yield me
 as a maiden to her **lover**.

Text 3: RV 4.20.5 (Griffith 1896)

vi yo rarapśa ṛṣibhir navebhir vṛkṣo na pakvaḥ sṛṇyo na jetā |
***maryo** na yoṣām abhi manyamāno 'chā vivakmi puruhūtam*
indram ||

Him who is sung aloud by recent sages, like a ripe-fruited
 tree, a scythe-armed victor;
 I, like a **bridegroom** thinking of his consort, call hither
 Indra, him invoked of many

2.2. Avestan

Wikander (1938) revealed the trend of semantic changes of this word between Vedic and Avestan. As many Iranian and Indic shared words, it developed a negative connotation due to Zoroastrian changes. In Avestan, *mairya* is among the sinners comparable to Ahrīman, karapans, wolves and magicians (Wikander 1938: 35). Wikander showed that this word originally referred to 'a group of young warriors' who joined war enthusiastically, even taking on the appearance of wolves (*vəhrka* in Avestan) because of their enthusiasm. He is even of the view that the above group of brotherhood society and its earthly counter parts worshipped Freidun (*Ōraētaona* in Avestan) and Garshaseb (*Kərəsāspa* in Avestan) as their guardians. However, in the society they lived a rude and reckless life which accounts for the semantic shift from 'warriors' to 'villains' in the Zoroastrian religion.

There are three major sections of the surviving Avesta, namely, a. the Yasnas (Ys.); b. the Yashts (Yt) and c. the Vidēvdāt (Woodard 2008: 101-102). The following texts illustrate the use of Av *mairyo* 'villain' as it appears in the Ys. and Yt.

Text 1: Ys. 9.11

yō jānaṭ ažiṃ sruvərəm yim aspo.garəm nərə.garəm yim višavantəm zairitəm, yim upairi viš raoḍaṭ ārštyō barəza zairitəm, yim upairi kərəsāspō ayan ha pitūm pačata ā rapiθwinəm zrvānəm. tafsatča hō **mairyō** x'isatča; fraš ayan hō frasparaṭ yaēšyantīm āpəm parāḡhat. paraš tarštō apatačaṭ naire. manā kərəsāspō (Reichelt 1911, p.2).

He smashed the horned dragon, the horse-devouring, man-devouring one, the venomous, yellow one, over whom the yellow venom rose up to the height of a spear; on whom keresaspa cooked his meal in an iron pot at noontime. The **villain** started to get hot and to sweat. He shot out from under the pot and scattered the boiling water. frightened he ran off and a way, Keresāspa, whose thoughts were those of heroes (Skjærvø 2006).

Text 2: Ys. 9.18

nī taṭ yaθa taurvayeni viṣpaṇam tbišvatam tbaēš daēvanam mašyānamča yāθwam Pairikanamča sāθram kaoyam karafnamča **mairyanamča** bizaṇranam ašəmao anamča bizaṇranam vəhrkanamča čaθwarə. zaṇranam haēnyāšča pərəθu. ainikayā pataiθyā (Reichelt 1911: 2).

(I call) down (all) that so that I may overcome the hostilities of all hostile ones, old gods and men, sorcerers and witches, false teachers, poetasters, and mumblers, **villains** on two feet, obscurantist's on two feet, wolves on four feet, and (their) army with wide front, deceiving and falling (all over) (Skjærvø 2006)

Text 3: Yt. 8.59 (To Tishtirya)

mā hē **mairyō** gəurvayōit, mā jahika, mā ašāvō asravayaṭ. Gāθō ahumərxš paityārənō imam dāēnam yam āhūirim zaraθuštṛim (Reichelt 1911: 28).

May not a **villain** seize it nor a witch or . . . (?) who has not performed the Gāthās, who destroys (this) existence, who opposes this daēnā, that of Ahura Mazdā, that of Zarathuštṛa (Skjærvø 2006: 91).

Text 4: Yt. 10.2 (To Mithra)

*mərənčaitē vīšpam daiŋ'haom mairyo miθrō.druxš spitama;
yaθa satəm kayaḍanəm avavat ašava. ĵācit miθrəm mā ĵanyā,
spitama mā yim drvatāt pərəsāŋ he mā yim x'ādaēnāt
ašaonāt; uvayā zī asti miθrō drvataēča ašaonaēča* (Reichelt 1911: 15).

The **knave** who is false to the treaty, o spitamid, wrecks the whole country, hitting as he does the truth owners as hard as would a hundred obscurantist's. Never break a contract, o spitamid, whether you conclude it with an owner of falsehood, or a truth owning follower of the good Religion; for the contract applies to both, the owner of falsehood and him who owns Truth (Gershevitch 1967: 74-75).

Text 5: Yt. 19. 56 (To the Earth and Divine Fortune)

*yat isať mairyo fraŋrase zrayaŋhō vouru. Kašahe maḡnō
apa.spayat vastrā, tať x'arənō isō, yať asti airyanəm
dahyunəm zātānəm azātānəmča yaťča ašaonō zaraθuštrahe
ā tat x'arənō apa.hiḍať, aḍa hāu apaḡžārō bvať zrayaŋhō
vouru. kašahe vairiš, yō haosravā nāma* (Reichelt 1911: 17).

The Turian **villain** Frangrasyān sought it from the vourukasha sea. He threw off (his) clothes and naked sought that fortune which belongs to the Aryan lands, to the born and unborn, and to orderly Zarathushtra. Then that fortune rushed forth, that fortune ran away, that fortune evaded (him). Then that stream came into being, flowing out of the Vourukasha sea, the lake called Haosravah (fameds) (Skjærvø 2006: 116).

Text 6: Yt. 19.77 (To the Earth and Divine Fortune)

*yať paiti kava haosrava tam kərəsəm upatəm čarətəm yəm
darəḡəm nava. frāθwərəsəm razurəm yať dim mairyo. nurəm
aspaēšu paiti farətata: vīšpe bvať aiwi.vanyā ahurō kava
haosrava mairīm tūirīm fraŋrasyānəm bandayať
kərəsavazdəm puθrō kaēna syāvaršānāi zūrō.ĵatahe
narahe.aḡraēraθaheča naravahe . . . ?* (Reichelt 1911: 17)

so that {...} Kavi Haosravah [outmaneuvered] Keresavazdeh / on that (famous) long race course of nine intersections / [around the All-Aryan] Forest / when the **scoundrel** of crooked [mind] / contended with him at horse racing. / Overcame all (of his enemies) / the lord Kavi Haosravah. / [He slew] the Turian **scoundrel** Frangrasyan, / he bound Keresavazdeh, / (doing that) in revenge for Syāuuaršan, being the son of (this) treacherously slain hero, and (in revenge) for heroic Agraēratha (Humbach and Ichaporia 1998: 53)

Text 7: Yt. 19.82 (To the Earth and Divine Fortune)

yey'he taṭ x'arənō isaṭ mairyo tūiryō fraṇrasa vīspāiš avi karšvan yāiš hapta. Pairi yāiš hapta karšvan mairyo apatat fraṇrase isō x'arənō zaraθuštrāi. ā. taṭ x'arənō frazgaḍata avi vāyam vītāpəm. inja mā urvisyatəm, aēzo jasatəm aēzahe, yaθa kaθača tē ās zaošō mana yaṭ ahurahe mazdā daēnayāšca māzdayasnāiš (Reichelt 1911: 17).

His was the fortune that the Turian **villain** Frangrasyān sought in all the seven continents in the seven continents in which the **villain** Frangrasyān ran about seeking the fortune of Zarathushtra. Then he rushed upon that fortune pursuing it to the wide water, (calling). Ho, go back here! (Skjærvø 2006: 118).

2.3. Old Persian

The following texts presents the use of Old Persian *marikā* 'young man' < **mariyaka* (Kent 1953: 202) from DNb, Darius's inscription in Naqsh-e Rostam (Kent 1953: 137).

Text 1: DNb. 50-55

marikā, daršam azdā kušuvā, čiyākaram ahi, čiyākaramtai ūnarā, čiyākaramtai parīyanam: mātai ava vahištam θadaya, tayatai gaušyā θanhyāti; avašči āxšnudi, taya paratar θanhyāti (Kent 1953: 138-139)

O **young man**, very much make known of what kind you are, of what kind (are) your skills, of what kind (is) your conduct! Let not that seem the best to you which is

spoken in your ears; listen also to that which is said besides (Schmitt 2000: 39-41).

Text 2: DNb. 55-60

marikā, *mātayat awa nabam θadaya*, *taya ... kunavāti: taya skauθiš kunavāti*, *awaščī dīdi*; *marikā*, ... *mā patiyātaya ... māpati šiyātiyā ayāumainiš bavāhi ... mā raxθa(n) tu ...* (Kent 1953: 138-139)

O **young man**, let not that seem good to you, which the ... does, what the weak one does-observe that too! O young man, do not set yourself against the ..., moreover do not become (a man) without fervour in counter-attack owing to your blissful happiness! Let not ...! (Schmitt 2000: 39-41)

2.4. Middle Persian

Middle Persian *mērag* derives from **mariyaka* according to the regular change in the diphthong /ai/ to /e/ in Middle Persian and the nominal suffix /-ka/ or /-aka/ which changes to /g/. Examples from Middle Persian are drawn from two sources. The first is the Bundahišn which was published in the late Sassanid period, and is a collection of various materials taken from a variety of sources and consists of 36 chapters (Tafazolli 1998: 141-145). The second is the Kārnāmag-i ardaxšīr -ī pābagān, the only historical work in the Pahlavi language. It deals with historical issues and is full of fables and myths about Ardashir, the founder of Sassanid kingdom (Tafazolli 1998: 263-265).

The following texts exhibit the use of Middle Persian *mērag* which indicates 'husband' in the Bundahišn. This word is frequently used with *ziyānag* 'wife' (Wikander 1938: 22-41) and 'a couple' (*ziyānag*, *mērag*) as proper names *asfīyān* (*mērag*=man) and *zarishom* (*ziyānag*=woman) who are the founders of the dynasties of the kings. In the Kārnāmag-i ardaxšīr -ī pābagān, however, this word denotes a 'messenger' though the dictionary meaning is 'a young man' and 'husband'.

Text 1: Bundahišn

az jam ud jamak ī-š x^wah/ būd/ zād juxt-ē(w) mard ud zan āgenēn zan ud šōy būd hēnd. mērag Asfīyān ud ziyānag zarišom nām būd hēnd. (Pakzad 2005: 390)

From Jam and Jamak who were brother and sister, a pair of male and female was born. These two persons married to each other. The **husband** was *Asfiyān*, and the wife was *Zarishom* (Bahar 1990: 149).

Text 2: Kārnamag-i ardaxšīr -ī pābagān

mard ī ardaxšīr, ka ō pēš ī kēd ī hindugān rasīd, kēd ham – čiyōn/čēon mērag dīd, pēš ku mērag saxwan guft, u-š ō mērag guft ku tu xwadāyī pārsīgān pad ēn kār frēstīd ku x^wadāyīh ī ērānšahr pad ēw-x^wadāyī ō man rasēd? (Faravashi 2003: 137).

When Ardashir's man reached the presence of the Ked of India, the latter observing the **messenger**, spoke to him, before he could express himself, (the purport of his message) to the following effect "Are you sent by the king of the Parsis to put me the question:" will the sovereignty of the kingdom of Iran reach unto me as its emperor? (Faravashi 2003: 149).

2.5. Early Modern Persian

The Early Modern Persian examples below are drawn from two early sources. The Panchatantra is a collection of originally <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_fable animal fables in verse and prose and it is "certainly the most frequently translated literary product of India". A Persian version from the 12th century became known as *Kalila and Dimna* (Monshi 1992: 15-17). The second source, *Abu Moslem Nameh*, is an epic taken from the life and heroic exploits of Abu Moslem Khorasani, the Abbasid leader and his followers (Tarsusi 1989: 5). The Early Modern Persian employs both *mīre* and *mīrak*, both 'young man, husband'.

Text 1: Kalila and Dimna

dorudgarī rā dar sarandīb zanī besyār zibā bud. ān zan va hamsāyeye vey rā olfati padīd āmad va xišāne dorudgar vey rā az mājarā bāxabar sāxtand. dorudgar āzmūn e gofteye ānān rā tadbīrī andīšīd va vānamud kard ke azm e safar dārad va zan rā vedā? kard va čun u [šowhar] beraft, zan, mīre rā beyāghānīd va mi?ād e āmadan qarār dād va dorudgar bigāhī az rāh-e nabahreht tā xāne raft. mīre qowm rā ānjā dīd, sā?ati tavaqqof kard, čandān ke be xābgāh raftand ..." (Monshi 1992: 218)

A carpenter lived in Sarandib with a beautiful wife. Unfortunately the wife started a friendship with a neighbour, and the carpenter's relatives made him aware of this relationship. He tried to discover if the news was correct. He pretended that he was going to go on a trip and decided to say goodbye to his wife. As soon as the husband set out for his trip, the wife informed the **young man** and arranged a meeting with him. But, the husband suddenly returned home from Nabahre. The husband saw the two persons (the young man and his own wife) and waited till they went to the bed-room. . . . (Monshi 1992: 218)

Text 2: Abu Moslem Nameh

az qazā, be dar-e dokkāni gozašt ke ā?inegar būd va yāxči nahādeh bud, dar robud va guft : hey , mīrakam, be gašti miravad (Tarsusi 1989, p.5).

She passed a mirror shop and seized a piece of cloth from that shop and said that her **husband** was going to go on a trip (Tarsusi 1989, vol. 2, 119).

2.6 Modern Iranian usage

The term *mire* in Post-Islamic texts used to refer to a member of an organized group. It appeared in the form of 'mire-ye Neishabouri' which is the name of a member of Malamatiyeh sect, a group of mystics who lived in the 11th to 13th centuries CE who concealed their virtue and good behaviors though they publicized their wrongs (Dehkhoda 2007: 2803). In the above use, *mire* was employed as a title rather than a proper name (Ansari-heravi 1983: 540). It is interesting to add that despite the fact that the word *mire* does not now exist in formal standard Persian, it is used in a number of informal spoken dialects. We find, for example, *mīrak* in the Bushehri, Bardestani and Dashti dialects in the south of Iran. It is used as a family name and carries a negative connotation as it is employed to denote occupations such as 'barber' which had been regarded among the low class occupations. This term also used to be employed in front of the name of barbers, e.g., Mir-Mohammad, Mir-Ahmad.

The form *mire* is employed in the Bardestani and Dashti,

Anaraki, Behdinan, Shushtari and Lori dialects with meaning of 'husband'. Afghani *maryai* means 'slave' (Mayrhofer, 1963: 5-6)

The Modern Persian equivalent of *mire* is *mol/mol* which means 'bastard'. Linguistically, the shift of /r/ to /l/ is very common in New Persian. The semantic shift may be explained because Persian words originated from two sources, namely, Old Persian and Avestan. As the words in Avestan have negative meanings, it is possible that the negative connotation ('bastard') goes back to its origin in Avestan ('villain').

3. Conclusions

Regarding the corpus and discussion presented above, the concluding remarks can be classified into phonological and semantic and changes as follows:

3.1 Phonetic change

One of the sub-groups of diphthongs in ancient Iranian was /ai/ which appeared as /ae/ and /ai/ in Avestan and Old Persian. The historical origin of /ai/ as a diphthong in ancient Iranian goes back to the Indo-European diphthongs such as /ai/, /ei/, /oi/ and /āi/. The most important change with regard to the diphthong (/ai/) in Middle Persian is that it appeared as /ē/ while in Modern Persian it changes into /ī/. Regarding the consonantal development, the phoneme /k/ in Avestan and Old Persian derives from PIE **kʷ*. When this phoneme (/k/) appears in middle and final positions of a word along with vowels and consonants such as /r/ and /n/, it changes to /g/ in Middle Persian and in Modern Persian and modern Iranian dialects it changes into /e/ or /a/. The other word found in Iranian dictionaries is /mul/ meaning 'libertine' whose phonological changes involve the shift from /r/ to /l/, /a/ to /u/ and /i/ to /u/, all of which are very common. Table 1 depicts the phonological changes of **mārya-* and **mariyaka*.

Table 1. The Phonological Changes of **mārya-* and **mariyaka*

Old Indo-Iranian	Old-Iranian	Vedic	Avestan	Old Persian	Middle Persian	Early Modern Persian	Modern Persian
<i>*meryo-</i>	... <i>*mariyaka</i>	<i>mārya-</i> ...	<i>māryā</i> <i>marika</i>	... <i>mērag</i>	<i>mire</i> <i>mirak</i>	<i>mire/mol</i> <i>mirak</i>

3.2 Semantic shift

Regarding the evidence and theories concerning the semantic shifts, the reader can understand a variety of meanings from the forms *māryaka* > *mairyaka* > *mērag* > *mīra/e* such as 'young man, youth, young fighter, lover, wanderer, wicked, thief, husband, client, servant, and devotee' (Table 2).

Table 2. The Semantic Changes of **mairya*- and **mariyaka*

Old Indo-Iranian	Old-Iranian	Vedic	Avestan	Old Persian	Middle Persian	Early Modern Persian	Modern Persian
young man	young man/ husband	young man, lover and free young man Mitanni 'member of war band'	one who revenges, sordid, liar	young man	husband / messenger	husband / young man / fornicator / adulterer	husband / low class occupation

The justification of opposing and contradictory meanings which are indicated in the cited texts varies in difficulty. Some of the semantic shifts or, better, extensions, are reasonably transparent. Obviously, the association of 'youth, young man' with a 'warrior' is easily motivated by the martial occupations of young men across the world. For example, Old Irish *óac* (< PIE **h₂yuh_x-ŋ-kós* < **h₂óyus* 'strength', Lat *iuvencus* 'young (cow)', Skt *yuvaśá-* 'young') indicates both 'young man' and 'warrior' as also does the related *oclach* 'young man, young warrior' (DIL-NOP 86, 93). The cognate set under discussion derives from PIE **méryos* 'young man' where we can certainly find semantic extensions into the area of conjugal relations, e.g., Lat *maritus* 'husband, lover' that mirrors some of the changes found in Iranian but the other cognates do not appear to include the martial element. It may, however, be supposed that this semantic shift, matching the development seen in the Old Irish example, had already transpired by the time of Indo-Aryan incursions into the Near East as we can see in its application to warrior bands among the Mitanni. This martial aspect should have functioned beside the meaning 'young man' in early Iranian as this provides the basis for explaining the accumulation of negative meanings found in Avestan ('member of warband' > 'liar, thief, villain').

The series of meanings suggesting lower occupational status seen in Middle Persian ('messenger') and Modern Persian ('servant, barber, etc') may be explained in one of two ways. The first presupposes that the semantic shift associated with Avestan ('villain') was sustained in later Iranian in Post-

Islamic times. For example, Av *pairikā* ‘demonic courtesan’ continued in Post-Islamic Iranian (*parī*) with the same negative connotations but also emerged in some Iranian dialects and standard Persian with what was probably the earlier (pre-Zarathrustra) positive meaning. This is why many Iranians today still name their daughters *Parī* ‘± angel’.

Alternatively, the semantic basis of both ‘youth’ and ‘young warrior’ may be sufficient to explain the shift to lower status occupations. Returning to the early Irish example above, *oclach* not only meant ‘young man’ and ‘warrior’ but also came to mean ‘an attendant, servant, vassal’, i.e., someone occupying a lower status. This extension of the semantic field might also help to explain the Modern Persian application of *mīrē* to the followers of the Malamatiyeh sect. Irish *oclach* similarly came to be employed to describe the followers or disciples of saints.

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